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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL
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Twenty-eighth session
29 April - 17 May 2002

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CZECH REPUBLIC

1 The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the initial report of the Czech Republic on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1990/5/Add.47) at its 3rd, 4th and 5th meetings, held on 30 April and 1 May 2002 (E/C.12/2001/SR.3-5), and adopted, at its 23rd meeting, held on 15 May 2002, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of the State party, which it found to be comprehensive and generally in conformity with its guidelines for the preparation of reports.

3. The Committee notes with appreciation the extensive written and oral replies given by the State party, as well as the candid and open nature of the constructive dialogue with the delegation. The Committee also welcomes the willingness of the delegation to provide further information in writing concerning the questions that could not be answered during the dialogue.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the enactment of a number of laws as well as legislative reforms undertaken in the country towards the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

5. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Council for Human Rights of the Government in 1998 and the Office of the Public Protector of Rights in 1999.

6. The Committee notes with appreciation the cooperation of non-governmental organizations with the State party in the preparation of the report.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant

7. The Committee notes that the State party encountered difficulties in implementing the economic, social and cultural rights contained in the Covenant arising from the process of transition to a market-oriented economy.

D. Principal subjects of concern

8. The Committee regrets that the Covenant has not been given full effect in the State party's legal order and that most of the rights contained in the Covenant are not justiciable in the domestic legal order, in particular, the right to adequate housing, which the State party considers as a merely "declaratory non-entitlement right".

9. The Committee regrets the absence of a national plan of action for the protection of human rights in accordance with the Vienna Declaration of 1993. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned about the absence of an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles of 1991.

10. The Committee is concerned that the inadequacy of the social safety nets during the restructuring and privatization process has negatively affected the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular by the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

11. The Committee is concerned about the recent decision of the State party to continue to apply, in contravention of its obligations under articles 2.2 and 6 of the Covenant, the lustration laws.

12. The Committee is deeply concerned about the high level of discrimination against Roma people in the fields of employment, housing and education. In spite of the fact that the State party acknowledges this fact, the administrative and legislative measures undertaken by the State party to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Roma are still insufficient to address the problem. The Committee is also concerned that, despite the affirmative programmes in favour of the Roma undertaken by the State party, no specific legislation has yet been enacted to outlaw discrimination against them.

13. The Committee notes with concern that the State party has not ratified a number of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions relevant to economic, social and cultural rights.

14. The Committee is alarmed about the increasing rate of unemployment, particularly among women, the Roma and other vulnerable groups.

15. The Committee is concerned that the minimum wage is still not sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for workers and their families.

16. The Committee notes with concern that there continues to be inequality in wages between men and women, with women earning approximately 75 per cent of men's salaries.

17. The Committee notes with concern that the problem of domestic violence against women is not being sufficiently addressed and about the fact that the Penal Code of the Czech Republic does not contain any specific provision protecting women against domestic violence.

18. The Committee is concerned about the increasing rate of trafficking in women as well as the sexual exploitation of children.

19. The Committee is deeply concerned about the acute shortage of housing and the privatization of some public housing stocks which have resulted in a sharp rise in rents, forced evictions and homelessness.

20. The Committee is also concerned about the inadequacy of measures to ensure a decent life for persons with disabilities, including the mentally ill.

21. The Committee is deeply concerned about the high rate of drugs and tobacco use as well as the high level of alcohol consumption, especially among children and the youth.

22. The Committee notes with concern that the incidence of HIV/AIDS is increasing, especially among young people.

23. The Committee is deeply concerned about the over-representation of Roma children in so-called "special schools" which are primarily designed for mentally retarded children, resulting in discrimination, substandard education and the stigma of mental disability.

24. The Committee is concerned about a constant decrease in the budget expenditure allocated to education and the consequences thereof on the enjoyment of the right to education.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

25. The Committee urges the State party to take appropriate steps to give full effect to the Covenant in its legal system, so that the rights covered by it may be directly invoked before the courts.

26. The Committee strongly recommends that the State party adopt a National Plan of Action for Human Rights and within this framework the creation of a National Human Rights Institution, to deal with the protection and promotion of all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.

27. The Committee strongly recommends to the State party to integrate the provisions of the Covenant into its privatization programmes and provide for social safety nets in carrying them out.

28. The Committee urges the State party to repeal the lustration laws.

29. The Committee urges the State party, in line with "The Concept of Roma Integration", approved by the Government on 23 January 2002, to take all necessary measures, legislative or otherwise, to eliminate discrimination against groups of minorities, in particular Roma.

30. The Committee recommends that the State party take into account the relevant parts of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action when implementing the Covenant in the domestic legal order, in particular in respect of article 2.2 of the Covenant and that it include in its next periodic report information on action plans or other measures it has taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the national level.

31. The Committee encourages the State party to provide statistical data in its second periodic report, in particular on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by women, Roma and people with disabilities.

32. The Committee recommends the State party to ratify, in particular ILO Convention No. 2 on Unemployment, ILO Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection, ILO Convention No. 117 on Social Policy, ILO Convention No. 118 on Equality of Treatment, ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age, ILO Convention No. 174 on Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents and ILO Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour.

33. The Committee calls upon the State party to take effective action to reduce the unemployment rate in particular among Roma people, women and other vulnerable groups.

34. The Committee urges the State party to re-examine on a periodic basis the level of minimum wages in order to secure a decent standard of living for all workers and their families.

35. The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts to address the gender inequality and to take the effective measures, legislative or otherwise to ensure that women enjoy full and equal participation in the labour market, particularly in terms of equal pay for work of equal value.

36. The Committee calls upon the State party to enact specific legislation on domestic violence.

37. The Committee urges the State party to adopt effective measures against the trafficking in women as well as the sexual exploitation of children.

38. The Committee urges the State party to take effective measures to address the problems of: (a) the housing shortage by adopting housing programmes, especially for the disadvantaged and marginalized groups; (b) forced evictions and homelessness by respecting the Committee's General Comments 4 and 7 and devising a comprehensive plan to combat homelessness.

39. The Committee encourages the State party to adopt a comprehensive National Health Strategy.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt effective measures to ensure more appropriate living conditions for persons with disabilities. The Committee requests the State party to report in its second periodic report on the laws and measures adopted by the State party with regard to people with disabilities, including the mentally ill, in particular on the number hospitalized, the facilities made available to them and the legal safeguards put into effect for the protection of patients.

41. The Committee calls upon the State party to adopt effective measures to reduce tobacco smoking, drug abuse and alcohol consumption, especially among children.

42. The Committee recommends to the State party to comply with the standards of the international guidelines on HIV/AIDS and human rights, adopted at the Second International consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights in September 1996.

43. The Committee recommends that the State party consider increasing the budget allocation for education.

44. The Committee urges the State party to take immediate and effective measures to eliminate discrimination against Roma children by removing them from "special schools" and integrating them into the mainstream of the educational system.

45. The Committee encourages the State party to provide human rights education in schools at all levels and to raise awareness about human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, among State officials and the judiciary.

46. The Committee requests the State party to inform the Committee, in its second periodic report on steps taken to implement its concluding observations. The Committee also encourages the State party to continue involving non-governmental organizations and other members of the civil society in the preparation of its second periodic report.

47. Finally, the Committee requests the State party to submit its second periodic report by 30 June 2007.

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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IRELAND

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the second periodic report of Ireland on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1990/6/Add.29) at its 6th and 7th meetings, held on 1 and 2 May 2002 (E/C.12/2002/SR.6 and 7), and adopted, at its 17th meeting held on 10 May 2002, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the second periodic report of the State party, which was prepared in general conformity with the Committee's guidelines. The Committee expresses its particular appreciation for the inclusion by the State party of a separate chapter on follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, adopted in 1999, on the State party's initial report.

3. The Committee welcomes the constructive dialogue with the delegation, which included a large number of government officials with expertise on subjects relevant to the provisions of the Covenant

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation the ratification in November 2000 of the 1996 revised European Social Charter and the 1995 Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter, as well as the ratification in December 2000 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

5. The Committee notes with appreciation the establishment of the Equality Authority in October 1999, under the Employment Equality Act (1998), and the entry into force of the Equal Status Act in October 2000.

6. The Committee commends the State party for establishing the Human Rights Commission under the Human Rights Commission Act (2000).

7. The Committee also commends the State party for the legislative measures taken to combat domestic violence and to eradicate corporal punishment in schools.

8. The Committee notes with appreciation the continuing decline in the unemployment rate since the consideration of the State party's initial report, i.e. down from 6 per cent in 1999 to 4.3 per cent in 2001, and in particular the considerable decline in the long-term unemployment rate from over 9 per cent in 1996 to 1.2 per cent in 2001.

9. The Committee welcomes the introduction of a minimum wage in April 2000.

10. The Committee also welcomes the State party's revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) as set out in "Building an inclusive society" (February 2002).

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant

11. The Committee notes the favourable economic conditions prevailing in the State party and observes no insurmountable factors or difficulties preventing the State party from effectively implementing the Covenant.

D. Principal subjects of concern

12. The Committee notes with regret that, despite its previous recommendation in 1999, no steps have been taken to incorporate or reflect the Covenant in domestic legislation, and that the State party could not provide information on case law in which the Covenant and its rights were invoked before the courts.

13. The Committee is concerned that the Human Rights Commission established by the Human Rights Commission Act (2000) is not yet operational.

14. The Committee regrets that the Disability Bill does not adopt a human rights-based approach, as recommended in its previous concluding observations. Moreover, the Committee regrets that section 47 of the Disability Bill contains a clause purporting to remove the rights of people with disabilities to seek judicial redress if any of the Bill's provisions are not carried out.

15. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of discrimination against persons with physical and mental disabilities, especially in the fields of employment, social security benefits, education and health. The Committee is particularly concerned that people with disabilities, including those working in sheltered workshops, do not have the status of employees and therefore do not qualify for the minimum wage arrangements; if, however, they do benefit from minimum wage arrangements, they are liable to lose their rights to free medical care.

16. The Committee regrets that the State party has not yet undertaken any measures with regard to the Committee's 1999 recommendation concerning the inconsistency of article 40.1 of the Constitution on equality before the law with the principle of non-discrimination as set out in articles 2 and 3 of the Covenant.

17. The Committee is concerned about the inadequacy of the minimum wage and welfare payment levels set by the State party in relation to its obligations under articles 7, 9 and 11 of the Covenant.

18. The Committee is concerned about the continued impediments imposed by the State party with respect to trade unions obtaining collective bargaining licences and the possible risk of dismissal for members of non-authorized trade unions in the event of strike action, despite the Committee's observation in 1999 (para. 19).

19. The Committee is concerned that the State party, despite the Committee's recommendation in 1999 (para. 12), has still not adopted a human rights-based approach to NAPS.

20. The Committee is concerned that: (a) many new households cannot secure adequate and affordable housing; and (b) some 1,200 families of the traveller community are living in roadside encampments without access to water and adequate sanitary facilities, and are liable to be forcibly evicted.

21. The Committee is concerned that a large number of persons with mental disabilities whose state of health would allow them to live in the community are still accommodated in psychiatric hospitals together with persons suffering from psychiatric illnesses or problems, despite efforts by the State party to transfer them to more appropriate care settings.

22. The Committee notes with regret that a human rights framework encompassing, inter alia, the principles of non-discrimination and equal access to health facilities and services, as outlined in paragraph 54 of the Committee's General Comment No. 14 on the right to health, was not embodied in the recently published National Health Strategy. The Committee also regrets the State party's failure to introduce a common waiting list for treatment in publicly funded hospital services for publicly and privately insured patients.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

23. Affirming that all economic, social and cultural rights are justiciable, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (see paragraph 22 of the Committee's 1999 concluding observations) and strongly recommends that the State party incorporate economic, social and cultural rights in the proposed amendment to the Constitution, as well as in other domestic legislation. The Committee points out that, irrespective of the system through which international law is incorporated in the domestic legal order (monism or dualism), following ratification of an international instrument, the State party is under an obligation to comply with it and to give it full effect in the domestic legal order. In this respect, the Committee would like to draw the attention of the State party to its General Comment No. 9 on the domestic application of the Covenant.

24. The Committee requests the State party to describe in its next periodic report the initiatives undertaken by the Human Rights Commission to promote economic, social and cultural rights.

25. The Committee strongly recommends that the State party adopt a human rights-based approach in the Disability Bill. In particular, the Committee recommends that the clause in section 47 of the Disability Bill, which purports to deny people with disabilities the right to judicial redress, be removed.

26. The Committee recommends that the State party conduct and complete as soon as possible a thorough review of the sheltered workshops for the disabled and consider adopting measures, legislative or otherwise, allowing people with disabilities to work with full employment status and to retain the right to free medical care.

27. The Committee also recommends that the All-Party *Oireachtas* Committee urgently consider amending article 40.1 of the Constitution on equality before the law, in the light of the principle of non-discrimination as set out in articles 2.2 and 3 of the Covenant.

28. The Committee urges the State party to reconsider its methods of fixing the minimum wage and welfare payment levels so as to ensure they conform to the State party's obligations under articles 7, 9 and 11 of the Covenant.

29. The Committee recommends that the State party adequately protect in law and practice trade unions' rights to conduct collective bargaining.

30. Noting that a review of the Domestic Violence Act (1996) was undertaken in 1999, the Committee requests the State party to explain, in its next periodic report, the measures it has introduced in response to the review's recommendations including, but not confined to, the recommendation to develop a "domestic violence pilot intervention project".

31. The Committee urges the State party: (i) to ensure that the Combat Poverty Agency is well-resourced and able to fulfil, in an effective manner, its statutory advisory functions; (ii) to give proper attention to the research and recommendations of the Combat Poverty Agency; and (iii) to integrate human rights into NAPS, in accordance with the Committee's statement on poverty (E/C.12/2001/10, 10 May 2001). In this regard, the Committee reaffirms the State party's obligation to make the Covenant rights enforceable in domestic legislation and confirms that, whether or not the State party takes this step, it still has a legal obligation to integrate economic, social and cultural rights into NAPS.

32. The Committee also urges the State party to accelerate its social housing programmes in order to reduce the waiting time for social housing. Moreover, the State party should enhance its efforts: (a) to provide, as early as possible, alternative accommodation for the 1,200 traveller families who are living in roadside encampments without adequate facilities and to respect General Comments Nos. 4 and 7 of this Committee; and (b) to meet its target of providing all necessary traveller accommodation by 2004.

33. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report up-to-date and accurate information, including statistical data, on measures taken to provide adequate accommodation to traveller families.

34. The Committee reiterates the recommendation it made in 1999 that the State party speed up the process of transferring persons with mental disabilities who are not suffering from serious psychiatric illness and who are still living in psychiatric hospitals, to more appropriate care settings.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party review the recently published National Health Strategy with a view to embracing a human rights framework in that strategy, in line with the principles of non-discrimination and equal access to health facilities and services, as outlined in paragraph 54 of General Comment No. 14. The Committee furthermore urges the State party to introduce a common waiting list for treatment in publicly funded hospitals for privately and publicly insured patients.

36. The Committee urges the State party to enact legislation that extends the constitutional right to free primary education to all adults with special educational needs.

37. The Committee encourages the State party, as a member of international organizations, including international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to do all it can to ensure that the policies and decisions of those organizations are in conformity with the obligations of States parties under the Covenant, in particular the obligations contained in articles 2.1, 11, 15, 22 and 23 concerning international assistance and cooperation.

38. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that its contribution to international development cooperation reaches 0.45 per cent of GNP by the end of 2002 (see paragraph 4 of the Committee's concluding observations on the State party's initial report) and that this annual figure increases, as quickly as possible, to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of GNP.

39. The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, and in particular among State officials and the judiciary, and, in its next periodic report, to inform the Committee on all steps taken to implement them. It also encourages the State party to continue to involve non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the preparation of its third periodic report.

40. Finally, the Committee requests the State party to submit its third periodic report by 30 June 2007 and to include in that report detailed information on the steps it has undertaken to implement the Committee's recommendations contained in the present concluding observations.

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Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

BENIN

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the initial report of Benin on its implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1990/5/Add.48) at its 8th, 9th and 10th meetings, held on 2 and 3 May 2002 (E/C.12/2002/SR.8-10), and adopted at its 24th meeting, held on 15 May 2002, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of the State party, which broadly follows its guidelines, and the State party's written replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/Q/BEN/1).

3. The Committee notes with satisfaction that it has embarked on an open and constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation. It regrets, however, that some of the written replies to the list of issues were incomplete, fragmentary or missing and that those given orally during the dialogue were often vague and general.

4. The Committee notes the delegation's promise that more specific information on a variety of economic, social and cultural indicators will be given in the State party's second periodic report.

B. Positive aspects

5. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Constitution adopted in 1990 contains a section devoted to human rights, including certain economic, social and cultural rights.

6. The Committee welcomes the proposal by the head of the State party's delegation that the Committee should send a delegation to the country to take stock of the situation there, the steps taken to give effect to the Covenant and the areas where progress needs to be made, possibly in cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant

7. The Committee notes the difficult economic situation that persists in the State party, being due in part to its relatively undiversified economic structure and the effects of the structural adjustment programmes it has followed since 1989 and of its foreign debts.

8. The Committee notes that the prevalence of certain traditions, customs and cultural practices, including those set down in the 1931 Dahomey Code of Customary Law, leads to substantial discrimination against women and girls and prevents them from fully exercising their rights under the Covenant.

D. Principal subjects of concern

9. The Committee is concerned at the fact that, although the 1990 Constitution guarantees certain economic, social and cultural rights, no specific law, apart from the Labour Code, has been adopted to give effect to the rights guaranteed by the Covenant.

10. The Committee is concerned at the serious problem of poverty facing the State party. Despite positive economic growth since 1995, a large proportion of the population is living below the poverty line.

11. The Committee is concerned that, although the 1990 Constitution says that men and women have equal rights (art. 26), women continue to face widespread discrimination, especially where access to employment, land and credit and inheritance rights are concerned.

12. The Committee deplores the inadequate action taken by the State party to combat the persistent practice of female genital mutilation, generally of young women and girls.

13. The Committee deplores the State party's lack of progress in countering practices - in particular, polygamy and the early and forced marriage of girls - which prevent women and girls from exercising the rights which the Covenant accords them.

14. The Committee is concerned at the high unemployment rate in the State party, which especially affects young people, and the dismissals resulting from the privatization or liquidation of a number of national enterprises.

15. The Committee regrets that the minimum wage set by the State party is too little to provide workers and their families with a decent living.

16. The Committee is concerned at the continuing restrictions on the right to strike, particularly those imposed by Ordinance No. 69-14 of 19 June 1969 concerning the exercise of the right to strike.

17. The Committee is particularly concerned at the fact that 80 per cent of workers work in the informal sector, and are therefore not registered and not covered by social security.

18. The Committee is deeply concerned at the practice of *vidomégon* - the placement of children in domestic service in families where they all too often suffer abuse, violence and exploitation. It is also very concerned about the trafficking in children, both within the country and with other States in the region.

19. The Committee is concerned at the large numbers of children who work, and as a result have no access to education.

20. The Committee is concerned at the large number of street children.

21. The Committee is concerned at the lack of a social policy on housing and the lack of low-cost housing. It notes with grave concern that rents are unaffordably high for a large sector of the population, in particular the disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and that houses are demolished without compensation. The Committee is also concerned at the growing number of persons living in the street and in sub-standard housing in shanty towns lacking all basic services.

22. The Committee notes with concern the disparities in living standards between urban and rural areas, given that people living in rural areas have considerably less access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity and that the privatization of water and electricity are leading to a rise in costs.

23. The Committee is concerned at the inadequate health services and the lack of awareness-raising concerning sexual and reproductive health, as a result of which infant and maternal mortality have not been reduced. It is also concerned at the large number of illegal abortions, which are the principal reason for the high maternal mortality rate in the State party.

24. The Committee is concerned at the lack of hospitals and health clinics and at the growing number of unqualified personnel in the health sector, especially in the rural areas.

25. The Committee is concerned at the persistently high illiteracy rate in the State party, which is higher among women than men. It also notes with concern the cultural preference given in educational matters to male children, as can be seen in the markedly higher primary school enrolment rates for boys than for girls.

26. The Committee is concerned at the fact that primary education is not free of charge and that parents pay direct and indirect school fees.

27. The Committee considers it worrying that the State party is not making enough effort to preserve the diversity of languages in the country, and not taking steps to ensure that some of them do not disappear altogether.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

28. The Committee strongly urges the State party to ensure that the Covenant is fully taken into consideration in the formulation and implementation of all measures relating to economic, social and cultural rights and that, in practical terms, legal proceedings may be brought on the basis of its provisions.

29. The Committee recommends the State party to step up its efforts to reduce the impact of poverty among the population, in particular through more equitable distribution of resources and better access to services for those in need. It also urges the State party to include economic, social and cultural rights in its poverty reduction strategy document.

30. The Committee requests the State party to take more energetic and realistic steps to counter inequality between the sexes and discrimination against women in the State party, both in law and in practice. It urges the State party to adopt swiftly the Family Code that has been under discussion in Parliament since 1995.

31. The Committee enjoins the Government to redouble its efforts to end the practice of genital mutilation, in particular by passing a law that makes the practice a punishable offence, by establishing mechanisms for the protection of women and through programmes of education and financial support for practitioners of excision who cease their activities. The State party is invited to indicate in its second periodic report what progress it has made in this area.

32. The Committee enjoins the State party to ban customary practices that violate women's rights and to take energetic action to combat such practices and beliefs by all available means, including educational programmes involving traditional chiefs. The State party should concentrate more on eradicating the practice of polygamy and forced marriages.

33. The Committee urges the State party to take more effective action to reduce unemployment, especially where it affects young people, and to prevent mass dismissals or ensure that they are accompanied by social support measures.

34. The Committee strongly urges the State party to take appropriate action progressively to raise the minimum wage and thus enable wage-earners to meet their families' essential needs.

35. The Committee strongly urges the State party to repeal Ordinance No. 69-14 of 19 June 1969 concerning the exercise of the right to strike, and recommends the State party to restrict bans on the right to strike to essential services, in conformity with the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and, in the case of civil servants, to those responsible for keeping order.

36. The Committee recommends the State party to take whatever action is necessary to reduce the proportion of the population working in the informal sector and ensure that the social security system offers workers adequate coverage and minimum pensions.

37. The Committee invites the Government to take all effective legislative, economic and social measures to end the practice of *vidomégon* and to conduct campaigns to alert families, in particular in the poorest parts of the country, to the issue. It urges the State party to step up its efforts to combat trafficking in children, by passing legislation and by entering into agreements with the countries that receive such children.

38. The Committee suggests that the State party should monitor child labour effectively and punish the individuals and business that make use of child labour.

39. The Committee requests the State party to address the problem of street children and to seek to reintegrate street children into society and the school system.

40. The Committee recommends the State party to introduce a consistent public housing scheme, build more low-cost housing for disadvantaged and marginalized people in lower income brackets, arrange for rents for public housing to be regulated and avoid any forced evictions without compensation, and take priority measures for homeless persons and persons living in sub-standard housing in shanty towns, as indicated in the recommendations accompanying its General Comments Nos. 4 and 7.

41. The Committee urges the State party to do whatever is necessary to reduce the current disparities between urban and rural areas, by improving access to water, electricity and sanitation in rural areas and ensuring that water and electricity remain affordable.

42. The Committee urges the State party to improve its health services and undertake programmes on sexual and reproductive education. The Committee invites the State party to address the problem of illegal abortions as a matter of priority.

43. The Committee recommends the State party to establish a global health policy enabling the poorest sectors to have access to free, high-quality primary health care.

44. The Committee recommends the State party to step up efforts to provide girls and boys with equal access to education. It urges the State party to take effective measures to improve the literacy rate, particularly of women.

45. The Committee recommends the State party to undertake, by all available means including technical cooperation, the progressive introduction of free primary education. The Committee appeals to the State party to abide by the provisions of article 14 of the Covenant and to adopt, within two years, a detailed plan of action for the progressive implementation, within a reasonable number of years, to be fixed in the plan, of the principle of compulsory education free of charge for all.

46. The Committee urges the State party to get down to the formulation and adoption of a wide-ranging plan of national education for all, as called for in paragraph 16 of the Dakar Framework for Action. It is invited to take account, in formulating and carrying out that plan, of the Committee's General Comments Nos. 11 and 13, and to institute an effective follow-up system. It is invited to seek advice and technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in formulating and carrying out its plan.

47. The Committee recommends the State party to embark on a general policy of protecting its linguistic heritage.

48. The Committee requests the State party to publicize these concluding observations widely among all sectors of society, in particular civil servants and members of the judiciary, and to give details in its next periodic report of all it has done to respond to them. It also invites it to involve non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the preparation of its second periodic report.

49. Lastly, the Committee requests the State party to submit its second periodic report by 30 June 2007, providing detailed information on the action it has taken in response to the recommendations made in these concluding observations.

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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, THE CROWN DEPENDENCIES AND THE OVERSEAS DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the fourth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Dependent Territories on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/4/Add.5, 7 and 8) at its 11th, 12th and 13th meetings, held on 6 and 7 May 2002 (E/C.12/2002/SR.11-13) and adopted, at its 25th meeting held on 16 May 2002, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the fourth periodic reports of the State party, which were prepared in general conformity with the Committee's guidelines.

3. The Committee notes with appreciation the comprehensive written replies given by the State party, as well as the inclusion of representatives of some of the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Dependent Territories in the delegation (Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Bermuda and Montserrat) in the delegation. The

Committee welcomes the constructive dialogue with the delegation of the State party, which consisted of government officials with relevant expertise on the provisions of the Covenant. The Committee regrets, however, that in the course of the dialogue, the delegation did not provide more cogent replies to some of the questions posed by members of the Committee.

B. Positive Aspects

4. The Committee expresses appreciation for the enactment of the Human Rights Act (1998).

5. The Committee commends the establishment of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission under the Northern Ireland Act (1998).

6. The Committee also commends the measures undertaken by the State party since the consideration of its third periodic report, such as the New Deal programme for employment, the introduction of a national minimum wage in 1999 and measures taken to reduce homelessness, rough sleeping and permanent exclusion from schools.

7. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party has adopted the Care Standards Act (2000), establishing a National Care Standards Commission for England and a Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, setting national minimum standards for the independent health sector to reflect those in the National Health Service.

8. The Committee welcomes the adoption of new cell standards in prisons, which have led to the reduction of overcrowding in cells by 50 per cent, and the elaboration and provision of numerous educational activities for prisoners.

9. The Committee also welcomes the delegation's statement that the State party is currently in the process of reviewing its reservations to international human rights instruments, with a view to withdrawing those that have been superseded by legislation or practice.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant

10. In the light of information submitted to it by the State party, the Committee does not find any factors or particular difficulties that impede the full implementation of the Covenant in the United Kingdom. In the Overseas Dependent Territories, the limited population and the lack of resources can be considered as factors impeding the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

D. Principal subjects of concern

11. The Committee deeply regrets that, although the State party has adopted a certain number of laws in the area of economic, social and cultural rights, the Covenant has still not been incorporated in the domestic legal order and that there is no intention by the State party to do so in the near future. The Committee reiterates its concern about the State party's position that the

provisions of the Covenant, with minor exceptions, constitute principles and programmatic objectives rather than legal obligations that are justiciable, and that consequently they cannot be given direct legislative effect (see paragraph 10 of the Committee's concluding observations of December 1997 (E/C.12/1/Add.19)).

12. The Committee regrets that the State party has not yet prepared a national human rights plan of action as recommended in paragraph 71 of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and is deeply concerned about the delegation's statement that there is no intention of doing so.

13. The Committee is concerned that human rights education provided in the State party to schoolchildren, the judiciary, prosecutors, government officials, civil servants and other actors responsible for the implementation of the Covenant does not give adequate attention to economic, social and cultural rights.

14. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of de facto discrimination in relation to some marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, especially ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities, in various fields, including employment, housing and education. The Committee regrets the unwillingness of the State party to adopt comprehensive legislation on equality and protection from discrimination, in accordance with articles 2.2 and 3 of the Covenant.

15. The Committee is concerned that the national minimum wage is not set at a level that provides all workers with an adequate standard of living in accordance with articles 7 (a) (ii) and 11 of the Covenant. The Committee is also concerned that the minimum wage protection does not extend to workers under 18 years of age. The Committee considers that the minimum wage scheme is discriminatory on the basis of age, as it affords a smaller proportion of the minimum wage to persons between 18 and 22 years of age.

16. The Committee reiterates its concern that the failure to incorporate the right to strike in domestic law constitutes a breach of article 8 of the Covenant (see paragraph 11 of the Committee's 1997 concluding observations).

17. The Committee is deeply concerned that the incidence of domestic violence has increased in recent years.

18. The Committee reiterates its concern about the persistence of considerable levels of poverty, especially in certain parts of the country, such as Northern Ireland, and among certain sections of the population, such as ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and older persons. Moreover, despite measures taken by the State party to combat poverty and social exclusion, the gap between the rich and poor in the State party has increased, according to information provided by the State party. The Committee also notes with particular concern the high levels of child poverty among certain groups of society in the State party.

19. The Committee is concerned at the persistence of homelessness, particularly among certain groups of society, such as ethnic minorities. The Committee is further concerned that a large number of the homeless are alcoholics or suffer from mental illnesses.

20. The Committee notes with concern that poor quality housing and "fuel poverty" continue to be a problem for a large number of families and individuals.

21. The Committee is concerned about the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in some of the State party's Caribbean territories. It is particularly concerned about the number of HIV/AIDS cases in the Turks and Caicos Islands and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the lack of availability of, and access to, anti-retroviral medication for migrant workers and AIDS orphans.

22. The Committee notes with concern that the introduction of tuition fees and student loans, which is inconsistent with article 13 (2) (c) of the Covenant, has tended to worsen the position of students from less privileged backgrounds, who are already underrepresented in tertiary education.

23. The Committee reiterates the concern it expressed in paragraph 18 of its 1997 concluding observations that the educational structure in Northern Ireland continues to be heavily segregated on the basis of religion, despite the increased demand for integrated schools.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

24. Affirming the principle of the interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights, and that all economic, social and cultural rights are justiciable, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (see paragraph 21 of its 1997 concluding observations) and strongly recommends that the State party re-examine the matter of incorporation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in domestic law. The Committee points out that, irrespective of the system through which international law is incorporated in the domestic legal order (monism or dualism), following ratification of an international instrument, the State party is under an obligation to comply with it and to give it full effect in the domestic legal order. In this respect, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its General Comment No. 9 on the domestic application of the Covenant.

25. The Committee further recommends, recalling its previous recommendation (see paragraph 33 of its 1997 concluding observations), that the State party review and strengthen its institutional arrangements, within the government administration, which are designed to ensure that its obligations under the Covenant are taken into account, at an early stage, in the Government's formulation of national legislation and policy on issues such as poverty reduction, social welfare, housing, health and education. Given that its general comments are based upon experience gained over many years, including the examination of numerous States parties' reports, the Committee urges the State party to give careful consideration to its general comments and statements when formulating policies that bear upon economic, social and cultural rights.

26. The Committee encourages the State party, as a member of international financial institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to do all it can to ensure that the policies and decisions of those organizations are in conformity with the obligations of States parties under the Covenant, in particular with the obligations contained in articles 2.1, 11.2, 15.4 and 23 concerning international assistance and cooperation.

27. The Committee urges the State party to prepare, as soon as possible, a national human rights plan of action in accordance with paragraph 71 of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

28. The Committee strongly recommends that the State party establish a national human rights commission for England, Wales and Scotland, with a mandate to promote and protect all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.

29. The Committee strongly recommends the inclusion of effective protection for economic, social and cultural rights, consistent with the provisions of the Covenant, in any bill of rights enacted for Northern Ireland.

30. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that human rights education curricula and training programmes for schoolchildren and for the judiciary, prosecutors, government officials, civil servants and other actors responsible for the implementation of the Covenant give adequate attention to economic, social and cultural rights.

31. The Committee urges the State party to take more effective steps to combat de facto discrimination, in particular against ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, especially in relation to employment, housing and education. The Committee strongly recommends that the State party enact comprehensive legislation on equality and non-discrimination in United Kingdom law, in conformity with articles 2.2 and 3 of the Covenant.

32. The Committee requests that specific information be included in the next periodic report, on the measures and programmes relevant to the Covenant undertaken by the State party to follow up on the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

33. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that the level of the national minimum wage is determined with due regard to the requirements of an adequate standard of living. Moreover, the Committee recommends that minimum wage protection be extended to workers under 18 years of age and that the scheme be applied in a non-discriminatory manner to persons between 18 and 22 years of age.

34. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (see paragraph 23 of the Committee's 1997 concluding observations) that the right to strike be incorporated in legislation and that strike action no longer entail the loss of employment.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to combat domestic violence and, in particular, to ensure that there are sufficient refuge places to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. The Committee requests that the State party provide information in its next periodic report on further measures taken by the State party in relation to domestic violence, as well as on the results and effectiveness of such measures.

36. Given the principle of the dignity of the individual, which provides the foundation for international human rights law (see paragraph 41 of the Committee's General Comment No. 13) and in the light of article 10.1 and 10.3 of the Covenant, the Committee recommends that the physical punishment of children in families be prohibited, in line with the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (see paragraph 31 of the 1995 concluding observations of that Committee (CRC/C/15/Add.34)).

37. The Committee urges the State party to continue to address the problem of poverty and social exclusion as a matter of high priority, with special focus on the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and particular regions, such as Northern Ireland. When formulating its anti-poverty policies and programmes, the State party is urged to give the most careful attention to the Committee's statement on poverty and the Covenant (E/C.12/2001/10).

38. The Committee recommends that the State party focus its efforts to combat homelessness on those groups in society which are disproportionately affected, such as ethnic minorities. The Committee further recommends that the State party take the necessary measures to ensure that homeless persons suffering from serious health problems receive adequate health care.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party take immediate measures to improve the situation of the large number of families and individuals who live in poor housing conditions and to relieve the situation of those who are "fuel poor".

40. In the context of HIV/AIDS, the Committee urges the State party to ensure the availability of, and equal access to, anti-retroviral medication for all individuals in Overseas Dependent Territories.

41. The Committee urges the State party to take effective measures to ensure that the introduction of tuition fees and student loans does not have a negative impact upon students from less privileged backgrounds, in accordance with paragraphs 14, 20 and 45 of the Committee's General Comment No. 13 on the right to education. The Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information on the impact of tuition fees and student loans on lower socio-economic groups.

42. The Committee reiterates its recommendation in paragraph 29 of its 1997 concluding observations that the State party consider appropriate measures in Northern Ireland to facilitate the establishment of additional integrated schools in areas where a significant number of parents have indicated their desire to have their children enrolled in such schools.

43. The Committee encourages the State party to withdraw its reservations to the Covenant that have become redundant.

44. The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, in particular among State officials and the judiciary. It also encourages the State party to involve non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the preparation of its fifth periodic report.

45. Finally, the Committee requests the State party to submit its fifth periodic report by 30 June 2007 and to include in that report detailed information on the steps it has undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations.

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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

1. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considered the second periodic report of Trinidad and Tobago on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1990/6/Add.30) at its 15th and 16th meetings, held on 8 May 2002 (E/C.12/2002/SR.15 and 16), and adopted, at its 27th meeting, held on 17 May 2002, the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the second periodic report of the State party, which was prepared in general conformity with the Committee's guidelines. While the Committee regrets the late submission of the second periodic report, it is pleased to have been able to reinitiate a dialogue with the State party However, it regrets that the delegation did not comprise sufficient experts in the field of economic, social and cultural rights.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Human Rights Unit within the Ministry of the Attorney-General in 1998.

4. The Committee takes note with satisfaction of the adoption of legislation during the past five years, including the Equal Opportunity Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Maternity Protection Act and the Children (Amendment) Act.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto.

6. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the Domestic Violence Unit within the Gender Affairs Division.

7. The Committee commends the introduction of free secondary education for all.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Covenant

8. The Committee takes note from the statement of the delegation that the current political stalemate in the State party is impeding the enactment of legislation relating to the advancement and full realization of economic, social and cultural rights for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

D. Principal subjects of concern

9. The Committee is deeply concerned that the State party has not incorporated or reflected the Covenant or its provisions in the domestic legal order and that the State party could not provide information on case law in which rights contained in the Covenant were invoked before the courts.

10. The Committee is concerned that the State party has not yet formulated a comprehensive plan of action on human rights in accordance with paragraph 71 of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

11. The Committee is concerned that economic, social and cultural rights are not part of the mandate of the Ombudsman.

12. The Committee notes with concern that the State party has not ratified a number of ILO Conventions relevant to economic, social and cultural rights and that it has denounced various human rights instruments, including the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

13. The Committee is concerned at the lack of disaggregated data in the State party's report and written replies, especially with regard to gender participation in employment, participation of women and children in the informal sector and poverty, in particular with regard to disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

14. The Committee is concerned about the lack of specific and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in the State party. The Committee is particularly concerned that the Equal Opportunity Act 2000 does not afford protection to individuals on the grounds of sexual orientation, age and HIV/AIDS status, among others.

15. The Committee is concerned about the lack of facilities for persons with disabilities, who are unable to participate in many occupations owing to physical barriers and lack of equipment.

16. The Committee is concerned about the high rate of unemployment in Trinidad and Tobago, in particular among young people between 15 and 19 years old.

17. The Committee notes with concern that women earn less than men for work of equal value, especially in the private sector.

18. The Committee is concerned that the minimum wage is not sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for workers and their families.

19. The Committee is deeply concerned that the minimum age for work, which is too low, in certain cases as low as 12 years, leaves children more vulnerable to exploitation and prejudices their right to education.

20. The Committee is concerned at the range of categories of workers denied the right to strike with legal justification. The Committee also notes with concern the existence of legislation that greatly restricts the recognition of trade unions in collective bargaining with employers.

21. The Committee is concerned about the high rate of child labour. In this respect, the Committee notes with concern that the State party has not ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

22. The Committee is concerned that despite some positive initiatives, including the establishment of the Domestic Violence Unit, the incidence of violence against women remains high. The Committee also notes with concern the persistence of gender stereotypes that discriminate against women.

23. The Committee is concerned that clandestine abortion is the cause of a high rate of maternal mortality due to infections and complications from procedures performed under unsanitary conditions by untrained personnel.

24. The Committee also notes with concern the continuing high rate of HIV/AIDS, especially among young women.

25. The Committee notes that the State party, in answering questions about specific programmes devoted to reducing and preventing infant mortality and maternal mortality, as well as teenage pregnancies and back-street abortions, did not provide disaggregated data on a comparative basis which would put the Committee in the position to ask focused questions as to how the delineated health programmes have actually been put into practice.

26. The Committee is deeply concerned about the living conditions of prisoners and detainees in the State party, especially with regard to access to health care and adequate food and basic facilities.

27. The Committee is concerned about the large number of people living below the poverty line, especially women heading single parent households, who receive insufficient protection from the State party in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

28. The Committee is deeply concerned about the lack of housing programmes to provide the poorest members of society with appropriate accommodation. The Committee is also concerned at the number of urban squatter communities which are exposed to forced evictions, in the light of the highly restrictive legal conditions governing their right to tenure.

29. While the Committee welcomes the abolition of corporal punishment in schools, it is concerned at the continued resort to corporal punishment at home and for adult males in the justice system.

30. The Committee is also concerned at the high rates of domestic and sexual violence, the excessive use of force by the police and the persistence of a generalized "culture of violence" in Trinidad and Tobago.

31. The Committee is concerned that problems of persisting overcrowding in hospitals, lack of staff and non-accessibility of basic drugs have put great strain on the public health service, which has detrimental effects on access to basic health-care facilities, goods and services, especially for the disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

32. The Committee urges the State party to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights are incorporated in national domestic legislation and made justiciable. The Committee points out that, irrespective of the system through which international law is incorporated in the domestic legal order (monism or dualism), following ratification of an international instrument, the State party is under an obligation to comply with it and to give it full effect in the domestic legal order. In this respect, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its General Comment No. 9 on the domestic application of the Covenant.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party formulate and implement a comprehensive national plan of action for the protection and promotion of human rights, as recommended in paragraph 71 of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and include information on this matter in the next periodic report.

34. The Committee recommends that the State party provide the Ombudsman with powers to deal with all human rights issues, including economic, social and cultural rights.

35. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the ILO Conventions relevant to economic, social and cultural rights and to withdraw its reservation to article 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, the Committee notes with interest the State party's declaration that it will reconsider its position regarding the denunciation of human rights instruments.

36. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report extensive gender disaggregated data in order to facilitate the analysis of trends, progress or worrying tendencies with regard to the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

37. The Committee recommends that the State party take legislative and other effective measures to eliminate discrimination, in accordance with article 2.2 of the Covenant. In particular, the Committee wishes to encourage the State to undertake proactive policies to promote the rights of individuals, especially with regard to their sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS status.

38. The Committee urges that the State party enact specific legislation and adopt concrete measures to ensure better living conditions for persons with disabilities.

39. The Committee recommends that the State party take effective action to reduce unemployment among young people by providing further vocational training opportunities.

40. The Committee urges the State party to take legislative and other measures to ensure equal pay for work of equal value for men and women.

41. The Committee recommends that the State party review the minimum wage level in order to enable workers to attain an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families.

42. The Committee urges the State party to review and harmonize legislation on the minimum working age and to implement measures to provide children with sufficient legal protection. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party ratify ILO Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.

43. The Committee recommends that legislation preventing workers from striking be reviewed in the light of the State party's international commitments and that the requirements for trade union membership be lowered, in order to facilitate more constructive and meaningful dialogue between workers and employers. The Committee also urges the State party to ensure that mechanisms for monitoring conditions at work are provided with sufficient human and financial resources to enable them to protect the rights of workers effectively.

44. The Committee urges the State party to take effective legislative and other measures in order to address child labour. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party ratify ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

45. The Committee calls upon the State party to take all effective measures, including the enforcement of existing legislation and the extension of national awareness campaigns, to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women.

46. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its next periodic report detailed information based on comparative data about the problem of abortion in Trinidad and Tobago and the measures, legislative or otherwise, including the review of its present legislation, it has undertaken to protect women from clandestine and unsafe abortion.

47. The Committee, while noting the sustained efforts made to address HIV/AIDS problems, urges the State party to step up its measures to combat HIV/AIDS and, in particular, to enhance the provision of education on sexual and reproductive health.

48. The Committee recommends that the State party, in its next periodic report, provide more detailed statistics on a disaggregated and comparative basis concerning specific health programmes devoted to reducing and preventing infant mortality and maternal mortality, as well as teenage pregnancies and back-street abortions. The State party is invited to set benchmarks in this area which might form the basis of the dialogue with the Committee during the next periodic review.

49. The Committee urges the State party to enact specific legislation and adopt measures necessary to improve the living conditions of prisoners and detainees.

50. The Committee urges the State party to integrate economic, social and cultural rights into its poverty reduction programmes. In this regard, the State party is urged to give the most careful attention to the Committee's Statement on poverty and human rights of 4 May 2001 (E/C.12/2001/10).

51. The Committee urges the State party to devise a housing strategy for disadvantaged and marginalized groups and to provide low-cost housing units to them. The Committee also urges the State party to provide more disaggregated data on squatters, as well as to adopt measures to improve their legal position with regard to their security of tenure. In addition, the Committee recommends that the State party take into account the Committee's General Comments 4 and 7 on the right to adequate housing and on forced evictions.

52. The Committee calls on the State party to prohibit effectively the use of corporal punishment in all areas of life.

53. The Committee calls upon the State party to exercise the full authority of the law and all means at its command to eradicate the scourge of violence. The Committee reminds the State party that, in undertaking measures to combat violence, it must ensure respect for human dignity and the protection of human rights at all times. The Committee requests the State party to provide in its third periodic report detailed information on the measures it has taken and the progress it has achieved in its efforts to eradicate all forms of violence, particularly violence against women and children and excessive force used by the police.

54. The Committee recommends that the State party provide in its next periodic report, on a disaggregated and comparative year-by-year basis, facts and figures on access to basic health-care facilities, goods and services, and similar figures about the development of a private health-care system, including on the effects of this on continued access to health facilities by the disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society.

55. The Committee encourages the State party to continue to provide human rights education in schools at all levels and to raise awareness about human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, among State officials and the judiciary.

56. The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, in particular among State officials and the judiciary, and, in its third periodic report, to inform the Committee on all steps taken to implement them. The Committee also recommends that the State party involve non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the preparation of its third periodic report.

57. Finally, the Committee requests the State party to submit its third periodic report by 30 June 2007 and to include in that report detailed information on the steps it has undertaken to implement the Committee's recommendations contained in the present concluding observations.